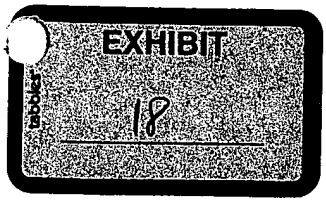

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Idun Pharmaceuticals Selects Cardiovascular Disease Drug Candidate - Apoptosis Inhibitor Effectiv e as Treatment for Heart Attack In Preclinical Models -

SAN DIEGO, Feb. 5 / PRNewswire/ -- Idun Pharmaceuticals, Inc. today announced the selection of IDN-6734 as the lead clinical candidate in its cardiovascular program. IDN-6734 is a small molecule caspase inhibitor being developed for the treatment of acute myocardial infarction, or heart attack. Based on positive preclinical results, the company has chosen this candidate for planned toxicology studies required for filing an Investigational New Drug Application (IND). The Phase 1 clinical trial is planned to start late this year.

Experiments in rodents showed that IDN-6734 decreased heart muscle damage by 27% to 55% when administered after a simulated heart attack. In addition to preserving heart muscle, IDN-6734 also improved the pumping ability of the heart. Studies in pigs confirmed the rodent findings. IDN-6734 provided a 22% to 32% reduction in heart muscle damage. The pig heart closely resembles the human heart in its response to both injury and therapeutics. Therefore, successful demonstration of the effectiveness of IDN-6734 in the pig is a crucial step in advancing IDN-6734 into human clinical trials.

Idun recently announced the completion of a Phase 1 clinical trial of another closely related compound, IDN-6556 for liver disease. IDN-6556 was shown to be safe and well tolerated in the Phase I trial involving 50 normal adults.

"Apoptosis, or programmed cell death, is a major contributor to heart disease, including the tissue damage associate with a heart attack," said Robert Armstrong, Ph.D., Director of Cell Biology at Idun. "Results of our work in the rodent and the pig tell us that caspase inhibitors, which block apoptosis, are effective in reducing the damage associated with heart attacks and further, can be effective when administered after the heart attack occurs. The improvements we saw in the heart's pumping effectiveness, combined with reductions in heart muscle damage, provides a compelling basis for moving IND-6734 into human studies."

"Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of Americans," noted Dr. Steve Mento, Idun's President and CEO. "More than 7 million people in this country have suffered a heart attack -- almost 3,000 people each day die from a heart attack in the U.S. alone. All of those people potentially could have benefited from our drug, either by saving their life or by improving their outcome. We are encouraged by the data from our preclinical models and are eager to get started with clinical testing in humans."

Idun Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is a biopharmaceutical company located in San Diego, CA. It creates innovative human therapeutics with a primary focus on controlling apoptosis, or programmed cell death. Apoptosis is normal physiological process mediated by a cascade of intra-cellular proteins. Too much, inappropriate, or too little apoptosis is believed to play a role in many important human diseases. Idun believes that controlling the cell death process will have utility in treating cancer, neurodegenerative diseases, ischemic disorders and cardiovascular disease. The company has a commercialization strategy encompassing: strategic collaborations with major pharmaceutical companies; internal, independent development of selected small molecule therapeutics; and out-licensing of diagnostics, gene therapies, and bioproduction technologies. Idun has a broad patent portfolio covering the fundamental and core technologies involved in the regulation of cell death and has established partnerships with Abbott Laboratories in cancer, with Elan Corporation, plc in stroke, and Becton Dickinson and Company in research reagents.

Some of the statements in this press release are forward-looking statements and do not guarantee future performance and involve risks and uncertainties. Actual results may differ substantially from the results that the forward-looking statements suggest for various reasons. These forward-looking statements are made only as of the date of this press release.

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